

**Testimony in Support (With Modification Recommended) of  
Senate Bill Number HB-5497  
An Act Concerning Gender Neutrality  
In the State Constitution  
Committee on Government Administration  
and Elections**

**March 25, 2022**

Co-Chairs Flexer and Fox, and Members of the Committee on Government Administration and Elections,

My name is George Unser. I am representing the Humanists and Freethinkers of Fairfield County. I am here today to testify in favor of Bill HB 5497, An Act Concerning Gender Neutrality in the State Constitution. I support the task force to be formed by this bill as it provides for equal rights for people of all genders. However, I feel that the scope of the task force should be expanded to include removing other outdated language in the Constitution, including unconstitutional religious language and religious privilege.

An example of religious privilege embedded in the Constitution is Article Seven - of Religion. This article leaves no space for nonbelievers like me. It starts with "It being the right of all men to worship the Supreme Being..." This assumes that "the" Supreme Being exists and that everyone worships it. It does not specify the right for one not to worship any supreme being at all. The Article goes on to say that the government gives you the right to choose which church you go to, but doesn't specify the equal right to attend none at all.

In the twenty-first century, there is no need to reference gods or religion in any way in a public document, especially in a state constitution. Such language can only lead to divisiveness. A recent Gallop poll showed that 42% of the Connecticut electorate identify themselves as nonreligious.<sup>1</sup> It is important to change the State Constitution to guarantee equal rights for me and all other nonreligious people in Connecticut.

I am concerned and frightened that legislative activities to reduce the rights of nonreligious people that have occurred throughout the country over the last few years may ultimately result in attempts to restrict rights here in my state. I want Connecticut to protect my rights and the rights of all other nonreligious people in the state.

The Connecticut Constitution must protect the rights of all people regardless of their gender, religion or no religion at all.

Thank you.

George Unser

Fairfield, CT 06824

<sup>1</sup> "The Religious Regions of the U.S." By Jim Morgan, April 6, 2018, Gallop poll.